

MINUTES
of a meeting of the Governance Board
15 October 2024
(13:30-16:00)
At Queen's Court

Present:

Anne-Marie Dean, Chairman
Ian Buckmaster, Company Secretary

Carole Howard, Office Administrator
Jenny Douglass, Community Support Assistant

Carol Dennis, Dawn Ladbrook and Di Old, Members

1 Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received for the absence of Jenny Gregory, Val Perry and Ron Wright

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

3 Minutes of meeting held 17 September 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2024 were agreed as a correct record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

There were no matters arising.

4 Finance Report

(a) Finance Report for September

The Finance Report for September was submitted.

Expenditure for the month had been £10,322, broadly in line with recent monthly outgoings. The third quarter's instalment of the Council's contract payment had been received in the month, and interest of £47.50 was received in the Savings account.

The bank balances at the end of the month were noted.

There was nothing to which attention needed to be drawn.

(b) Photocopying machine

The office photocopier (also used for scanning documents) was originally rented from the provider, ISL (who are based in Barking) in 2019 on a five-year contract, due to expire shortly. The rental cost was £167.62 per quarter, separate from the cost of toner (charged per copy taken), which varied per month, and there was also an annual maintenance charge of £234.

The original intention had been to roll the rental contract over until 31 March 2026 (subject to review in the light of whether or not the contract with the Council is renewed). ISL had, however, suggested that it would be more financially advantageous for the machine to be bought from them and the rental arrangement terminated. This would not affect the monthly toner charges or the annual maintenance fee.

The rental remaining to be paid (from January 2025 until March 2026) would be £1,005.72; the machine had, however, been offered for sale at the price of £714.00. It was noted the machine would be a saleable asset should the contract not be renewed; and that, if the contract were renewed, no further rental cost would be incurred.

The Board noted that the directors had considered the proposition and had agreed that the rental agreement be terminated and the machine purchased. The overall saving until the end of the contract would be at least £291.

In accordance with that decision, the machine had now been purchased.

The Board endorsed the decision to acquire the machine.

(c) Insurance

Arising from the prospective purchase of the photocopier referred to above, the insurance arrangements had been adjusted to provide £5,000 cover for the replacement value of the office contents, including IT, furniture and the photocopier. This had resulted in a small increase in the monthly premium, which would rise by £5.49 from November.

5 Havering Place-based Partnership (HPbP)

The Chairman advised that the HPbP Board had recently discussed the Winter Pressures arrangements for the coming winter months. To avoid A&E services

becoming over-stretched, BHRUT were seeking assistance from partners to ensure that people were able to remain in their homes rather than be admitted to hospital, although the Council's difficult financial position meant that they faced difficulties with providing home care services. The representative of the care home sector had commented that they felt it important that the sector was included in the discussion about winter pressures.

It would be important to ensure that details of the arrangements were clearly communicated to the public to avoid misunderstandings. Ms Ladbrook commented that, during a recent visit to staff at the ED of Queen's Hospital, a consultant had told her that the service was being treated inappropriately as if it was a GP practice by many people who had relatively minor medical issues; if that could be significantly reduced then the ED would be able to focus better on its principal role. She added that there used to be a "winter befrienders scheme", reinstatement of which might be helpful by enabling people to turn to befrienders rather than go to A&E. Many patients were now being seen on a "same day care" basis but doing so could lead to some people being perceived as having jumped waiting lists; but there were also problems of miscommunication within the hospital itself.

The Chairman expressed the hope that the imminent opening of the new St George's Centre would result in a reduction of pressure on Queen's Hospital services by providing the opportunity to develop a new range of services and freeing up space enabling Queen's to have the opportunity to redesign and improve service models.

6 NHS North East London/North East London Health and Care Partnership

No matters were reported.

7 Safeguarding and Quality - update

Ms Old drew attention to a large care home – now accommodating well over 100 residents – in respect of which a growing number of complaints was being received by the Council.

She added that she had taken part in the recent Enter & View visit to a pair of care homes in Hornchurch, with which she had been very impressed. She advised that she could not understand why the homes in question had previously been regarded with caution by the Quality Assurance Team.

8 Engagement projects - update

- **Long COVID**

Following the agreement in principle of the HPbP Board to setting up a Peer Support Group, a meeting would shortly be held to discuss the next steps.

- **NHS Dentistry in NEL**

- This project is on hold pending a response from NHSNEL.

The Dentistry Service's own survey of patients' views had been extended to the end of September. Disappointingly, there were few responses across the whole of London; the 25 responses from Havering amounted to more than 10% of the total received, the fourth highest contribution of all boroughs.

- **Creative Health Havering**

- Healthwatch Essex were arranging an art exhibition at the Mercury Mall over the Christmas/New Year. The opportunity for the exhibition to be staged at other venues in Havering (possibly Queen's Theatre and St George's Centre) was being explored.

- **North East London Research Engagement Network (REN)**

- The REN survey had been completed but the results were still awaited.

- **Enter & View visits**

- The report on the Mealtime visits at Queen's Hospital had been published, together with a detailed action plan from BHRUT which would be the subject of a follow-up visit in due course.

The report of the E&V visit to the Greenwood Practice had also been published.

The report of the E&V visit to the ELIFAR facilities (formerly Lilliputs) in Wingletye Lane is in hand.

The report on the visits to A&E continued to be on hold, given the major changes that had since been made. A further informal visit had just taken place and arrangements were in place for a further E&V visit in November.

Plans were in hand for a visit to the new St George's Centre once it had been open for a couple of months.

- **Patient Participation Groups (PPG)**

- The appointment of the new postholder who will be working on PPGs for NHSNEL was awaited. Once the appointee was in place, arrangements would be made to work with the HPbP/NHSNEL, PCNs and individual GP practices to restart PPGs across the borough.

- **Mystery Shopping – provision of Hearing Loop systems at health facilities**
 - Dates for the Mystery Shopping visits had been agreed.
- **NSPCC Pants Campaign**
 - The survey aiming to find out grandparents' understanding of the Pants Campaign, and to raise awareness of it, was being prepared. It would be carried out in early November, to coincide with expected national publicity from the NSPCC.
- **Defibrillators in Havering**
 - Contact with the LAS had produced a list of the locations in Havering known to them where defibrillators (defibs) were available. There were about 180 such locations but the LAS had identified a need for at least one further defib in each of the following areas: Havering Park/Chase Cross, Rise Park, Hylands and Elm Park West. They had asked for help in identifying possible locations in those areas.

9 St George's Centre - progress

The completed building was expected to be handed over soon and the GP practice was due to take up its accommodation in November, with the other services starting over the next couple of months. There were some staffing issues for the Centre to be settled and it was not yet known whether Transport for London would be taking action to improve bus services to it.

10 Review of Complaints Procedure

Following correspondence with a member of the public who was dissatisfied with the actions of a local Healthwatch organisation (not Havering), Healthwatch England had advised:

“...we have confirmed with both organisations that the remits of The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) formerly the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) and Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) do not extend to complaints about Healthwatch England or local Healthwatch.

“As a result, neither the LGO or PHSO should be referenced within your complaints policies or processes. ... Please note that Healthwatch England should also not be listed as a next-tier arbitrator for complaints relating to local Healthwatch.”

The Complaints Procedure had last been reviewed and updated in May 2022. The version then agreed had included a reference to complaints being referred

to the LGO. In the light of the advice from HWE, the Procedure had now been updated to remove the reference to the LGO (as part of the complaints procedure) and to add that neither the LGO, PHSO nor HWE would deal with complaints about local Healthwatch.

The Board APPROVED the revised Procedure.

11 Future of Healthwatch

The Board noted that, following the publication of a report criticising the CQC, the Government had decided to review a number of organisations involved in regulating health services with a view to rationalising them. The review would include both Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch.

In parallel with that, HWE was continuing its campaign to improve the funding arrangements for Healthwatch, with one possibility being that HWE would take over from local authorities the role of commissioning local Healthwatch.

HWE would be seeking arrangements to:

- Give patients more explicit rights
- Develop a more robust and easy-to-navigate complaints system
- Use patient experience as a critical performance measure for care

Further guidance was awaited from the Department for Health about the review arrangements.

12 Next meeting

The next meeting was due on 12 November 2024, at the office.

The arrangements for the meeting in December would be notified in due course.

[Note: It was subsequently decided to postpone the next meeting until 26 November and to cancel the December meeting]

_____ Chairman